



# News Release

**For immediate release:** January 5, 2011

(11-002)

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## **New continuing competency rules for Washington licensed nurses**

*Law took effect January 1, 2011*

OLYMPIA — New rules requiring nurses around the state to update their education and keep their nursing skills sharp are intended to improve patient safety.

The new law, which affects about 100,000 nurses in Washington, went into effect January 1. The Washington State Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission believes the rules improve patient safety through education and staying active as a nurse. The new requirements will assure nurses stay current on the knowledge and skills of their nursing practice.

Under the new rules, every three years nurses must complete 531 hours of active practice, 45 hours of continuing nursing education, and a self-assessment and reflection of individual professional practice. The commission will begin random audits on continuing competency in 2014, at the end of the first three-year period.

The nursing commission held public meetings on the continuing competency rules for several years. It agrees that active practice is the key to safe practice. The commission also provided updates to several nursing organizations, sent notices to listservs, and put together a website with sample forms, frequently asked questions, and other resources.

Additional [information on the new rules](#) is on the nursing commission's website ([www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/Professions/Nursing/continuecomp.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/Professions/Nursing/continuecomp.htm)).

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